The Lark Wisdom Series

The Wisdom of À Kempis

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The Wisdom of À Kempis

THE LARK WISDOM SERIES

The Wisdom of À Kempis

With an Introduction by
Howard V. Sutherland

Thomas à Kempis

GODFREY A. S. WIENERS
AT THE SIGN OF THE LARK
NEW YORK 1902

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Introduction

ALTHOUGH it may never be settled definitely whether the "Imitation" is to be accredited to Jean Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, to one Jean Gersen, Abbot of Vercelli, or to Thomas Hammerken (or Hammerlein), it is generally conceded by the authorities on the matter that only the claims of the former and the latter are deserving of consideration. That of the Abbot Gersen is supported exclusively by certain Italian writers and members of the Benedictine fraternity, who

base their opinion upon the unsubstantial foundation of an abbreviated signature, "J. Gers.," attached to two manuscripts of the work in question, dated 1441 and 1464, and to several others dated the early part of the sixteenth century.

That of the latter, Thomas Hammerken (or Hammerlein) would seem to be based chiefly on the fact that he was born (about 1380) in the diocese of Cologne, at Kempen — hence À Kempis. His early education was received at Deventer, where the Brothers of the Common Life had a monastery; later he retired among the Augustinians at their Priory of Mount St. Agnes, of which his

brother was Superior, at Zwolle. He wrote several religious treatises which were considered of importance in their day, and manuscripts of the "Imitation" dated 1425, 1441, and 1445 bear his name as author. Thomas was professed in 1407, became sub-prior about twenty-five years later, and died in 1471.

On the other hand, M. Gence, in his "Parallelle des Phrases de l'Imitation de Jesu Christ" (Paris, 1836), announces himself as a supporter of Jean Le Charlier Gerson, in which opinion he is supported by MM. Moland, d'Héricault, Vert, and to no small extent by Dean Farrar. That personage, known in history as

The Most Christian Doctor, was born near Rheims in 1363. His was a stormy career, and his personality is more indelibly impressed upon his time than is that of either of his contemporaries. Before he was thirty he occupied the position of Chancellor of the University of Paris. He took an active part in the turbulent politics of the period, changed sides as the shuttlecock of Right was battledored from one party to another, defied popes, kings, and peoples, was forced to flee the country, and finally retired to a monastery at Lyons. There he devoted the remainder of his life to less aggressive pursuits, and died in 1429. His "De Con-

solatione Theologiæ," the fact that he is referred to as the author in manuscripts of the "Imitation" dated 1441 and 1460, and the likelihood that one who had dealt with men, and who was acquainted with the passions that govern them, would be better able to give fit advice in spiritual matters than another to whom life was but the pleasing murmur of a distant sea,—these considerations incline many to the opinion that the claims of the authorities just mentioned in behalf of Jean Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, are possibly the most worthy of acceptance.

Seeing, therefore, that the question of authorship of the "Imitation"

must always remain a matter of individual preferment, there will ever be those in whom the cherished volume awakens thoughts of Thomas, the recluse of Mount St. Agnes, and others to whom it will rather suggest the experienced priest, wearied of action, mellowed by the natural processes of age, and eager to become unified with that which alone is eternal. The general reader is more apt to give himself over to enjoyment of the work itself than to indulge in unsatisfactory speculations as to its author, especially when he considers the possibility, by no means remote, of its being the result of many different minds.

From the pages of a book which is generally considered a primer of moderate asceticism, a prayer manual for the religeuse, the editor has endeavored to gather such selections as might be helpful to the busy man and woman of to-day in character development, and in the formulating of rules for good conduct; he has sought to give prominence to the ethical and religious value of its teachings apart from the mystical, and to awaken in others than of the Roman Catholic persuasion a lasting interest in the work of a truly good man. To do this necessitated the delicate task of rejecting such matter as could not properly be included

after such restriction, although, needless to say, the text has not been emasculated by the elimination of distinctly religious thought.

It is becoming more and more difficult for us to understand the doctrine of absolute renunciation taught by the early Christian fathers, and accepted without question by certain religious enthusiasts up to the very threshold of the new century. It originated presumably as a counteracting force to the excesses indulged in by the society of Greece and Rome, and was considered necessary by the first followers of Christ as a means whereby the body social was to become regenerated. Christ

advised no such harsh measures of self-denial as do the subsequent promoters of Christianity ; but may not this be accounted for by the fact that, with his superior and prophetic vision, he probably foresaw the ultimate conversion of the race more clearly than did the others enlisted in his service? Being sure of himself, he was sure of his kind. He exhorted his little flock to believe and be saved, and left the infliction of punishments and renunciations (a questionable means, at best, of quickening in men a desire for life yon side the grave) to the shepherds who came after and who were not as sure of the flock as was he.

It has taken us over eighteen hundred years to understand the simple doctrines of the Nazarene, and, now that we are becoming better qualified to do so, we learn that enjoyment of life, with its higher pleasures, is more acceptable in the eyes of God than was the self-denial practised in the Middle Ages. We learn that more practical good is to be done by the humblest worker in the stony vineyards of the world than by an entire religious community when isolated from society. We learn that the Individual was created for an express purpose; that that purpose was to become a part of society, and that by detaching himself therefrom he not

only injures himself, but it also. Ours is not an age of acceptance, but of research, and the race is the gainer thereby.

These were not the convictions of him who laboriously committed the restful sentences of the "Imitation" to parchment, who, it is to be presumed, was content to worship God without attempting to understand Him. He seems to have been one who had lived a life of action and finally longed for peace. His youth would appear to have been spent in denunciations, and he was glad to end his days in prayer. In his time the whole world was corrupt, and he advocated retirement from it as the only

way by which the Individual could come into true communion with God.

Were it not that the "Imitation," redolent with the faint perfume of flowers that may pine within the shadows of convent walls, contained such repeated exhortations to abjure the society of men, to renounce not only the vanities of the world but even its most innocent and necessary pleasures, it would long ago have been as eagerly perused as are the works of the elder philosophers. And yet, despite his mediævalism, the author of the "Imitation" does not excite in any way our antagonism. His is not the bigot's fiery prejudice in favor of the Church to which he hap-

pened to have been attached by circumstance, nor is his the monasticist's pale and unsympathetic enthusiasm for the life that seems both unnatural and useless. He was merely a victim to the influences of his day, and, considering God to be something apart from the world He created, could think of no other way of obtaining salvation than by living in retirement and placating Him by fasting and prayer.

These ideas are no longer acceptable to-day. We are learning that God is within us, not above us; that He manifests Himself in the mightiness of the mountains; that His peace is proclaimed in the subtle

stillness of the valleys; that the winds are full of His harmony, and that the very movement of trees is rhythmically suggestive of the life that comes from Him. We have come to consider Jesus Christ as the Man rather than the Mystic, and we are aware that through pure fellowship we are one and all sons of the Father with him. And, finally, it is dawning upon us that the heaven of which Christ spoke, and which the painters of the past have pictured so graphically on their canvases, is here on earth; we know that it is something to be enjoyed while yet we live, and not, as was formerly supposed, only after "the long di-

vorce of death" has released our immortal from its mortal part.

We do not claim that ours is the Golden Age, neither do we pretend that we are any more perfect than were the self-torturing converts in the early days of Christianity. But of one thing we are sure, and that is that the clearer understanding and closer communion with God which it is ours to enjoy is not without an elevating influence on the race in general. As long as the blood courses hotly through our veins we shall be human, and victims, more or less, to the passions that were blown into us along with the breath that gives us life; but the mere fact of our

participancy in the Higher Companionship, of the consciousness of the Eternal Presence in our midst, is apt to prove more curbing to those same passions than any renunciations or self-inflicted punishments might be. We are preparing ourselves daily to stand in the greater glory that lies beyond the black atmosphere of death — not by prayers alone, but by deeds; and though when that hour comes we may not be spotless, yet if we are conscious of having done our best, and of having been worthy of the boon, the satisfaction of continued life, with its possibilities for further endeavor, will not be denied us.

In considering the wonderful progress made by this country in the comparatively short period of its existence, it is good to know that our advancement has not been bought at the cost of human life and human suffering as is the case with every other nation beneath the sun. Despite the fact that we, more than all others, are a practical people, and that we live, and are entering upon, a most practical age, it is good to know that we ever have been, and still are, God-fearing and humane. In the hearts of all citizens is a desire to be right and to do right; and though the republicanism of the hour may be different from that of the

first patriots, and though certain of us may be attracted for a time by the glitter of monarchies and by the military show that is the mainstay of imperialism, when the time comes we shall all stand shoulder to shoulder with our backs to the fickle seas, our faces towards the splendor of our heaven-reaching mountains and the golden glory of our boundless fields. We are a free people and our future is assured, for we know, as well as did À Kempis, that "there is no true liberty nor right joy but in the fear of God accompanied with a good conscience." To recognize this, and to endeavor to live up to it, is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Were the author of the "Imitation" alive to-day, and had he evolved, as we have, through the bitter lessons of each successive generation for over five hundred years, he would be the first to lift up his hands in ecstasy to the God so close to him; among the first to subscribe to the newer teaching which, after all, is but an outgrowth of the old, even as the red-lipped rose that springs from a dust-covered stem. Our spiritual progress to-day is due merely to a broader and more enlightened interpretation of the teachings of the past. Religion is the ethics of God, and is incapable of change; and the lesson of the "Imitation," in so far as it ap-

plies to our conduct and spiritual welfare, should still be as acceptable to the world as it was to the recluse in the days of religious persecutions, political assassinations, and social intrigues beyond the comprehension of man.

Neither is it difficult for us to discover the causes that brought this new religion (or, rather, this clearer interpretation of the old) into being. The *Sturm und Drang* of daily life, the absolute inefficiency of the modern movement to satisfy the cravings of the spirit, the fact that we are rapidly outgrowing the elementary phases of existence (wherein only material welfare is considered) and are

now prepared, or almost so, for that Higher Life of which the prophets sang ages ago ; and, more than all else, the beneficial influence exerted by women over the thought and action of the world, — these are the chief causes to which may be attributed the desire for something more than is offered by the routine of daily work, and the realization of worldly success which, alas! must ultimately be as vain as ashes cast upon the surface of great waters.

And yet there is something more. As the flower blossoms and turns its face to the sun, so the World Soul blossoms and turns to God, and we are now come to the period of our

blossoming. The twilight of the birth of Christianity is past; the night and dawn of the Dark and Middle Ages are over, and lo! the Day is ours, and we are preparing to crown the brows of our young century with the aureole of enlightenment and love. We know that the true imitation of Christ consists in doing our duty to the best of our ability; in keeping in communion with God and with our kind, and in living the life of the body, soberly and cleanly, as well as the life of the spirit. To be purposeful and sympathetic, of benefit to our fellows and to ourselves, this should be our aim. And we shall find it more easy of

accomplishment if we retire occasionally from the busy throng, and study, not only the teachings of our contemporaries, but also the counsels of those high-minded men who, like eternal stars, shine peacefully and clearly through the Past's oppressive night.

HOWARD V. SUTHERLAND.

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Wisdom of À Kempis

"HE that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness," saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught to imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and be delivered from all blindness of heart. Let therefore our chief endeavor be to meditate upon the life of JESUS Christ. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit, will find therein the hidden manna.

SURELY great words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God. I had rather FEEL compunction, than know the definition thereof.

IT is vanity to seek after perishing riches, and to trust in them. It is also vanity to strive after honors, and to climb to high degree. It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labor for that for which thou must afterwards suffer grievous punishment. It is vanity to desire to live long, and not to care to live well. It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to make provision for those things which are to

come. It is vanity to love that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither where everlasting joy abideth.

ALL men naturally desire knowledge; but what availeth knowledge without the fear of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that serveth God, is better than a proud philosopher who, neglecting himself, is occupied in studying the course of the heavens. Whoso knoweth himself, is lowly in his own eyes, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I understood all things in the world, and had not charity, what would

it avail me in the sight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds?

CEASE from an inordinate desire of knowledge, for therein is much distraction and deceit. Learned men are anxious to seem learned to others, and to be called wise. There be many things to know which doth little or nothing profit the soul: And he is very unwise who minds other things more than those that tend to his salvation. Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great confidence toward God.

THE more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest, the more strictly shalt thou be judged, unless thy life be also the more holy. Be not therefore elated in thine own mind because of any art or science, but rather let the knowledge given thee make thee afraid. If thou thinkest that thou understandest and knowest much; yet know that there be many more things which thou knowest not. Affect not to be overwise, but rather acknowledge thine own ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thyself before others, seeing there be many more learned, and more skilful in the

Scripture than thou? If thou wilt know or learn anything profitably, desire to be unknown, and to be little esteemed.

THE highest and most profitable lesson is the true knowledge and lowly esteem of ourselves. It is great wisdom and perfection to think nothing of ourselves, and to think always well and highly of others. If thou shouldest see another openly sin, or commit some heinous offence, yet oughtest thou not to think the better of thyself; for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to stand. We are all frail, but do thou esteem none more frail than thyself.

HAPPY is he whom truth by itself doth teach, not by figures and words that pass away, but as it is in itself. Our own opinion and our own sense do often deceive us, and they discern but little. What availeth it to cavil and dispute much about dark and hidden things, for ignorance of which we shall not be reproved at the day of judgment? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and to choose to dwell upon that which is curious and hurtful. We have eyes and see not.

THE more a man is at one within himself, and becometh of single heart, so much the more and higher things doth he understand without labor; for that he receiveth the light of wisdom from above. A pure, single, and stable spirit is not distracted, though it be employed in many works; for that it doeth all to the honor of God, and being at rest within, seeketh not itself in anything it doth. Who hinder and trouble thee more than the unmortified affections of thine own heart? A good and devout man arrangeth within himself beforehand those things which he ought to do. Neither do

they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination, but he ordereth them according to the direction of right reason. Who hath a greater combat than he that laboreth to overcome himself? This ought to be our endeavor, to conquer ourselves, and daily to wax stronger, and to grow in holiness.

ALL perfection in this life hath some imperfection mixed with it; and no knowledge of ours is without some darkness. A humble knowledge of thyself is a surer way to God than a deep search after learning. Yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the mere knowledge of anything

whatsoever, for that is good in itself, and ordained by God; but a good conscience and a virtuous life are always to be preferred before it. But because many endeavor rather to get knowledge than to live well; therefore they are often deceived, and reap either none or but little fruit.

O, IF men bestowed as much labor in the rooting out of vices, and the planting of virtues, as they do in the moving of questions, neither would so many evils be done, nor so great scandal be given in the world. O, how quickly doth the glory of the world pass away! Would that their

life had been answerable to their learning! then had their study and reading been to good purpose. How many perish by reason of vain learning of this world, who take little care of the serving of God. And because they rather choose to be great than humble, therefore they become vain in their imaginations. He is truly great who hath great love. He is truly great that is little in himself, and that maketh no account of any height of honor. And he is truly learned, that doeth the will of God, and forsaketh his own will.

WE must not trust every saying or suggestion, but warily and pa-

tiently ponder things according to the will of God. Yet, alas, such is our weakness, that we often rather believe and speak evil of others than good. But perfect men do not easily credit every one who speaks to them; for they know that human frailty is prone to evil, and very subject to error in words.

IT is great wisdom not to be rash in thy doings, nor to stand stiffly in thine own conceits; as also not to believe everything which thou hearest, nor immediately to relate again to others what thou hast heard or dost believe. Consult with him that is wise and of sound judgment, and

seek to be instructed by one better than thyself, rather than to follow thine own inventions. A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth him experience in many things. The more humble a man is in himself, and the more subject unto God, the more wise and peaceful shall he be in all things.

TRUTH, not eloquence, is to be sought for in Holy Scripture. Each part of the Scripture is to be read with the same Spirit wherewith it was written. We should rather search after profit in the Scriptures, than after subtle arguments. We ought to read plain and devout

books as willingly as those high and profound. Let not the authority of the writer be a stumbling-block, whether he be of great or small learning; but let the love of pure truth draw thee to read. Enquire not who spoke this or that, but mark what is spoken.

MEN pass away, but the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever. God speaks unto us in sundry ways without respect of persons. Our own curiosity often hindereth us in reading of the Scriptures, when we will examine and discuss that which we should rather pass over without more ado. If thou desire to profit, read

with humility, simplicity, and faithfulness; nor ever desire the repute of learning. Enquire willingly, and hear with silence the words of holy men. Let not the parables of the Elders displease thee, for they are not given without cause.

WHENSOEVER a man desireth anything inordinately, he becometh presently disquieted in himself. The proud and covetous can never rest. The poor and humble in spirit dwell in the multitude of peace. True quietness of heart is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the heart of a carnal man, nor in him

that is given to outward things, but in the spiritual and devout man.

GLORY not in wealth if thou have it, nor in friends because they are powerful; but in God who giveth all things, and who desireth to give thee Himself above all things. Esteem not thyself for the height of thy stature nor for the beauty of thy person, which may be disfigured and destroyed by a little sickness. Please not thyself in thy natural gifts or wit, lest thereby thou displease God, to whom appertaineth all the good whatsoever thou hast by nature. Esteem not thyself better than others, lest perhaps in the sight of God, who

knoweth what is in man, thou be accounted worse than they. Be not proud of well-doing; for the judgment of God is far different from the judgment of men, and that often offendeth Him which pleaseth them. If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others, that so thou mayest preserve humility. It hurteth thee not to submit to all men: but it hurteth thee most of all to prefer thyself even to one. The humble enjoy continual peace, but in the heart of the proud is envy, and frequent indignation.

LAY not thy heart open to every one; but treat of thy affairs with the wise, and such as fear God. Converse not much with the young, nor with strangers. Flatter not the rich: neither do thou appear willingly before the great. Keep company with the humble and single-hearted, with the devout and virtuous; and confer with them of those things that may edify. Be not familiar with any woman; but commend all good women in general to God. Desire to be familiar with God alone and His Angels, and avoid the acquaintance of men.

WE must have love towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that a person unknown to us is much esteemed of, from the good report given him by others; whose presence notwithstanding is not grateful to the eyes of those who see him. We think sometimes to please others by our society, and we rather displease them with those bad qualities which they discover in us.

WHO is so wise that he can fully know all things? Be not therefore too confident in thine own opinion; but be willing to hear the judgment

of others. If thy thought be good, and yet thou partest with it for God, and followest the opinion of another, this shall turn to thy good.

I HAVE often heard, that it is safer to hear and to take counsel, than to give it. It may also fall out, that a man's opinion may be good; but to refuse to yield to others when reason or a special cause requireth it, is a mark of pride and stiffness.

FLY the tumult of the world as much as thou canst; for the treating of worldly affairs is a great hindrance, although it be done with sincere intention; for we are quickly defiled,

and enthralled by vanity. Oftentimes I could wish that I had held my peace when I have spoken; and that I had not been in company. Why do we so willingly speak and talk one with another, when notwithstanding we seldom cease our converse before we have hurt our conscience? The cause why we so willingly talk, is for that by discoursing one with another, we seek to receive comfort one of another, and desire to ease our mind wearied with many thoughts: and we very willingly talk and think of those things which we most love or desire; or of those things which we feel to be against us.

WE might enjoy much peace, if we would not busy ourselves with the words and deeds of other men, and with things which appertain nothing to our charge. How can he abide long in peace, who trusteth himself into the cares of others, who seeketh occasions abroad, who little or seldom cometh to himself? Blessed are the single-hearted; for they shall enjoy much peace.

IF every year we would root out one vice, we should sooner become perfect men. But now oftentimes we perceive, on the contrary, that we were better and purer at the

beginning of our conversion, than after many years of our profession. Our fervor and profiting should increase daily; but now it is accounted a great matter, if a man can retain but some part of his first zeal. If we would do but a little violence to ourselves at the beginning, then should we be able to perform all things afterwards with ease and delight.

IT is a hard matter to forego that to which we are accustomed, but it is harder to go against our own will. But if thou dost not overcome small and easy things, when wilt thou overcome harder things? Resist

thy inclination in the very beginning, and unlearn evil habits, lest perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. If thou didst but consider how much inward peace unto thyself, and joy unto others, thou wouldest procure by demeaning thyself well, thou wouldest be more careful of thy spiritual progress.

IT is good that we have sometimes some troubles and crosses; for they often make a man enter into himself, and consider that he is here in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing. It is good that we be sometimes contradicted, and

that men think ill or inadequately; and this, although we do and intend well. These things help often to the attaining of humility, and defend us from vainglory: for then we are more inclined to seek God for our inward witness, when outwardly we be contemned by men, and when there is no credit given unto us.

SO long as we live in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation. Hence it is written in Job, "The life of man upon earth is a life of temptation." Every one therefore ought to be careful about his temptations, and to watch in

prayer, lest the devil find an advantage to deceive him; for he never sleepeth, but goeth about, seeking whom he may devour. No man is so perfect and holy but he hath sometimes temptations, and we cannot be altogether without them.

TEMPTATIONS are often very profitable to us, though they be troublesome and grievous; for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed. All the Saints passed through man's tribulations and temptations, and profited thereby. And they that could not bear temptations became reprobate, and fell away.

THERE is no man that is altogether free from temptations whilst he liveth on earth; for the root thereof is in ourselves, who are born with inclination to evil. When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another cometh; and we shall ever have something to suffer, because we are fallen from the state of our felicity. Many seek to fly temptations, and fall more grievously into them. By flight alone we cannot overcome, but by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies.

HE that only avoideth temptations outwardly and doth not pluck them by the roots, shall profit little; yea, they will the sooner return unto him, and will be more violent than before. By little and little, and by patience with long-suffering, through God's help, thou shalt more easily overcome, than by violence and thine own disquietude. Often take counsel in temptations, and deal not roughly with him that is tempted; but give him comfort, as thou wouldest wish to be done to thyself.

THE beginning of all evil temptations is inconstancy of mind and

small confidence in God. For as a ship without a helm is tossed to and fro by the waves, so the man who is careless and forsaketh his purpose, is many ways tempted. Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man. We know not oftentimes what we are able to do, but temptation shows us what we are. Yet we must be watchful, especially in the beginning of the temptation; for the enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of our hearts, but be resisted at the very gate, on his first knocking. Wherefore one said, "Withstand the beginnings: the remedy is applied too late, when the evil has grown

strong through long delay." For first there cometh to the mind a bare thought of evil, then a strong imagination thereof, afterwards delight and evil emotion, and then consent. And so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth complete entrance, for that he is not resisted in the beginning. And the longer a man is negligent in resisting, the weaker does he become daily in himself, and the stronger the enemy against him.

IN temptations and afflictions a man is proved, how much he hath profited; and his reward is thereby the greater, and his graces do more

eminently shine forth. Neither is it any such great thing if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeleth no affliction; but if in time of adversity he bear himself patiently, there is hope then of great growth in grace. Some are kept from great temptations, and in small ones which do daily occur are often overcome; to the end that, being humbled, they may never presume on themselves in great matters, while they are worsted in so small things.

TURN thine eyes unto thyself, and beware thou judge not the deeds of other men. In judging of others

a man laboreth in vain, often erreth, and easily sinneth; but in judging and examining himself, he always laboreth fruitfully. We often judge of things according as we fancy them; for private affection bereaves us easily of a right judgment. If God were always the pure object of our desire, we should not be so easily troubled, through the repugnance of our carnal mind.

FOR no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man, is any evil to be done; but yet, for the welfare of one that standeth in need, a good work is sometimes to be intermitted without

any scruple, or even to be changed for a better. For by doing this, a good work is not lost, but changed into a better. Without charity the outward work profiteth nothing; but whatsoever is done of charity, be it never so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it becomes wholly fruitful. For God weigheth more with how much love a man worketh, than how much he doeth. He doeth much that loveth much. He doeth much that doeth a thing well. He doeth well that rather serveth the common weal than his own will. Oftentimes a work seemeth to be of charity, and it is rather a work of the flesh; because natural

inclination, self-will, hope of reward, and desire of our own interest are motives seldom absent.

ENDEAVOR to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they be: for that thyself also hast many failings which must be borne with by others. If thou canst not make thyself such an one as thou wouldest, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking? We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

WE will have others severely corrected, and will not be corrected ourselves. The large liberty of others displeaseth us; and yet we will not have our own desires denied us. We will have others kept under by strict laws; but in no sort will ourselves be restrained. And thus it appeareth, how seldom we weigh our neighbor in the same balance with ourselves.

SEEK a convenient time of leisure for thyself, and meditate often upon God's loving kindness. Meddle not with things too high for thee; but read such things as may rather yield compunction to thy heart than occu-

pation to thy head. If thou wilt withdraw thyself from speaking vainly, and from gadding idly, as also from hearkening after novelties and rumors, thou shalt find leisure enough and suitable for meditation on good things.

NO man doth safely appear abroad, but he who can abide at home. No man doth safely speak, but he that is glad to hold his peace. No man doth safely rule, but he that is glad to be ruled. No man doth safely rule, but he that hath learned gladly to obey. No man rejoiceth safely, unless he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience.

IF thou wilt make any progress in godliness, keep thyself in the fear of God, and affect not too much liberty. Restrain all thy senses under discipline, and give not thyself over to foolish mirth. Give thyself to compunction of heart, and thou shalt gain much devotion thereby. Compunction layeth open much good, which dissoluteness is wont quickly to destroy. It is a wonder that any man can ever perfectly rejoice in this life if he duly consider, and thoroughly weigh his state of banishment, and the many perils wherewith his soul is environed.

THERE is no true liberty nor right joy but in the fear of God accompanied with a good conscience.

MISERABLE thou art, wheresoever thou be, or whithersoever thou turnest, unless thou turn thyself unto God. Why art thou troubled when things succeed not as thou wouldst or desirest? For who is he that hath all things according to his mind? neither I, nor thou, nor any man upon earth. There is none in this world, even though he be king or bishop, without some tribulation or perplexity. Who is then

in the best case? even he who is able to suffer something for God.

MANY weak and infirm persons say, Behold what a happy life such an one leads; how wealthy, how great he is, in what power and dignity! But lift up thine eyes to the riches of Heaven, and thou shalt see that all the goods of this life are nothing to be accounted of. They are very uncertain, and rather burdensome than otherwise, because they are never possessed without anxiety and fear. Man's happiness consisteth not in having abundance of temporal goods, but a moderate portion is sufficient for him. Truly it is

misery even to live upon the earth. The more spiritual a man desires to be, the more bitter does this present life become to him; because he sees more clearly and perceives more sensibly the defects of human corruption. For to eat and to drink, to sleep and to watch, to labor and to rest, and to be subject to other necessities of nature, is doubtless a great misery and affliction to a religious man, who would gladly be set loose, and freed from all sin.

O HOW great is human frailty, which is always prone to evil! To-day thou confessest thy sins, and to-morrow thou committest the very

same which thou hast confessed. Now, thou art purposed to look well unto thy ways, and within a while thou so behavest thyself, as though thou hadst never any such purpose at all. Good cause have we therefore to humble ourselves, and never to have any great conceit of ourselves: since we are so frail and so inconstant. That also may quickly be lost by our own negligence, which, by the grace of God, with much labor we have scarce at length obtained.

WHAT will become of us in the end, who begin so early to wax lukewarm? Woe be unto us, if we will so give ourselves unto ease as if all

were now peace and safety, when as yet there appeareth no sign of true holiness in our conversation! We have much need like young novices to be newly instructed again to good life, if haply there be some hope of future amendment, and greater proficiency in things spiritual.

VERY quickly there will be an end of thee here; see therefore to thy state: to-day man is; to-morrow he is gone. And when he is out of sight, quickly also is he out of mind. O the stupidity and hardness of man's heart, which thinketh only upon the present, and doth not rather care for what is to come!

Thou oughtest so to order thyself in all thy thoughts and actions, as if to-day thou wert to die. If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not greatly fear death. It were better to avoid sin, than to escape death. If to-day thou art not prepared, how wilt thou be so to-morrow? To-morrow is uncertain, and how knowest thou that thou shalt live till to-morrow?

WHAT availeth it to live long, when there is so small amendment in us? Alas! length of days doth not always better us, but often rather increaseth our sin. O that we had spent but one day in this world thor-

oughly well! Many there are who reckon years of conversion; and yet full slender oftentimes is the fruit of amendment. If to die be accounted dreadful, to live long may perhaps prove more dangerous. Happy is he that always hath the hour of his death before his eyes, and daily prepareth himself to die. If at any time thou hast seen another man die, make account that thou must also pass the same way.

WHEN it is morning, think that thou mayest die before night; and when evening comes, dare not to promise thyself the next morning. Be thou therefore always in readiness,

and so lead thy life that death may never take thee unprepared. Many die suddenly and when they look not for it; for the Son of Man will come in an hour when we think not. When that last hour shall come, thou wilt begin to have a far different opinion of thy whole life that is past, and be exceeding sorry that thou hast been so careless and remiss.

TRUST not to friends and kindred, neither do thou put off the care of thy soul's welfare till hereafter; for men will forget thee, sooner than thou art aware of. It is better to look to it betime, and to send some good before thee, than to trust

to other men's help. If thou be not careful for thyself now, who will be careful for thee hereafter? Time now is very precious: now is the day of salvation; now is the accepted time. But alas! that thou shouldst spend time so idly here, in which thou mightest purchase life eternal. The time will come, when thou shalt desire one day or hour to amend in, and I know not that it will be granted thee.

GATHER some profit to thy soul wheresoever thou art; so that if thou seest or hearest of any good example thou stir up thyself to the imitation thereof. But if thou ob-

serve anything worthy of reproof, beware thou do not the same. And if at any time thou hast done it, labor quickly to amend thyself. As thine eye observeth others, so art thou also noted again by others. O how sweet and pleasant a thing it is, to see brethren fervent and devout, well-mannered and well-disciplined! And on the contrary how sad and grievous a thing it is to see them live in a dissolute and disordered sort, not applying themselves to that for which they are called! How hurtful a thing is it, when they neglect the good purposes of their vocation, and busy themselves in that which is not committed to their care!

REMEMBER always thine end, and that time lost never returns. Without care and diligence thou shalt never get virtue. If thou begin to wax lukewarm, it will begin to be evil with thee. But if thou give thyself to fervor of spirit thou shalt find much peace, and feel less labor, by reason of the assistance of God's grace, and the love of virtue. The fervent and diligent man is prepared for all things. It is harder work to resist vices and passions, than to toil in bodily labors. He that avoideth not small faults, by little and little falleth into greater. Thou wilt always rejoice in the evening, if thou

have spent the day profitably. Be watchful over thyself, stir up thyself, admonish thyself, and whatever becomes of others, neglect not thyself. The more violence thou usest against thyself, the greater shall be thy profiting.

THERE is no great trust to be put in a frail and mortal man, even though he be profitable and dear unto us: neither ought we to be much grieved, if sometimes he cross and contradict us. They that to-day take thy part, to-morrow may be against thee; and often do men turn like the wind. Put all thy trust in God, let Him be thy fear and thy

love: He shall answer for thee, and will do all things well, and as is best for thee. Thou hast not here an abiding city; and wheresoever thou mayest be, thou art a stranger and pilgrim: neither shalt thou ever have rest, unless thou be inwardly united unto Christ.

FIRST keep thyself in peace, and then shalt thou be able to make peace among others. A peaceable man doth more good than he that is well learned. A passionate man draweth even good into evil, and easily believeth the worst. A good and peaceable man turneth all things to good. He that is in peace,

is not suspicious of any. But he that is discontented and troubled, is tossed with divers suspicions: he is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet. He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak; and leaveth undone that which it were more expedient for him to do. He considereth what others are bound to do, and neglecteth that which he is bound to do himself. First, therefore, have a careful zeal over thyself, and then thou mayest justly show thyself zealous also of thy neighbor's good.

THOU knowest well how to excuse and color thine own deeds, but

thou art not willing to receive the excuses of others. It were more just that thou shouldst accuse thyself, and excuse thy brother. If thou wilt thyself be borne with, bear also with another. Behold, how far off thou art yet from true charity and humility; for that knows not how to be angry with any, or to be moved with indignation, but only against a man's self. It is no great matter to associate with the good and gentle; for this is naturally pleasing to all, and every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those best that agree with him. But to be able to live peaceably with hard and perverse persons, or with the disorderly,

or with such as go contrary to us, is a great grace, and a most commendable and manly thing.

I NEVER found any so religious and devout, that he had not sometimes a withdrawing of grace, or felt not some decrease of zeal. There was never saint so highly rapt and illuminated, who first or last was not tempted. For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God, who hath not been exercised with some tribulation for God's sake. For temptation going before is wont to be a sign of comfort to follow. For unto those that are proved by temptations heavenly comfort is promised.

"To him that overcometh," saith He, "I will give to eat of the tree of life."

BY two wings a man is lifted up from things earthly, namely, by Simplicity and Purity. Simplicity ought to be in our intention; purity in our affections. Simplicity doth tend towards God; purity doth apprehend and taste Him. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be in thy heart free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and seek nothing else but the will of God and the good of thy neighbor, thou shalt thoroughly enjoy inward liberty. If thy heart were sincere and upright, then every

creature would be unto thee a living mirror, and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so small and abject, that it representeth not the goodness of God. If thou wert inwardly good and pure, then wouldst thou be able to see and understand all things well without impediment. A pure heart penetrateth heaven and hell. Such as every one is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly. If there be joy in the world, surely a man of pure heart possesseth it. And if there be anywhere tribulation and affliction, an evil conscience best knoweth it. As iron put into the fire loseth its rust, and becometh clearly red-hot, so he that wholly

turneth himself unto God, putteth off all slothfulness, and is transformed into a new man.

THE glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy. A good conscience is able to bear very much, and is very cheerful in adversities. An evil conscience is always fearful and unquiet. Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart condemn thee not. Never rejoice, but when thou hast done well.

WHY seekest thou rest, since thou art born to labor? Dispose thyself

to patience rather than to comfort, and to the bearing of the Cross rather than to gladness. What worldly man is there that would not willingly receive spiritual joy and comfort if he could always have it? For spiritual comforts exceed all the delights of the world, and the pleasures of the flesh. For all worldly delights are either vain or unclean; but spiritual delights alone are pleasant and honest, being sprung from virtue, and infused by God into pure minds. But no man can always enjoy these divine comforts according to his desire; for the time of temptation is never far away.

SET thyself always in the lowest place and the highest shall be given thee; for the highest is not without the lowest. The chiefest Saints before God are the least in their own judgments; and the more glorious they are, so much the humbler within themselves. Those that are full of truth and heavenly glory, are not desirous of empty glory. Those that are firmly settled and grounded in God, can in no way be proud. And they that ascribe all good unto God, whatsoever they have received, seek not glory one of another, but desire that glory which is from God alone; and above all things that God may

be praised in Himself, and in all His saints; and are always pressing on for this very thing.

BE therefore thankful for the least gift, so shalt thou be meet to receive greater. Let the least be unto thee even as the greatest, yea the most contemptible gift as of especial value. If thou consider the worth of the giver, no gift will seem little, or of too mean esteem. For that cannot be little which is given by the most High God. Yea, if He should give punishment and stripes, it ought to be matter of thankfulness; because He doeth always for our welfare, whatsoever He permitted to happen unto

us. He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankful for grace given, and patient for the taking away thereof: let him pray that it may return; let him be cautious and humble, lest he lose it.

RARELY is any one found so spiritual as to have suffered the loss of all things. For where is any man to be found that is indeed poor in spirit, and thoroughly void of all leaning on created things? "From afar, yea from the ends of the earth, is his value." If a man should give all his substance, it is as yet nothing. And if he should practise great repentance, still it is little. And if he

should attain to all knowledge, he is still afar off. And if he should be of great virtue, and of very fervent devotion, yet there is much wanting: especially one thing, which is most necessary for him. What is that? That leaving all, he forsake himself, and go wholly from himself, and retain nothing of self-love. And when he hath done all that is to be done, so far as he knoweth, let him think that he hath done nothing.

LET a man not think that of great weight, which might be esteemed great; but let him in truth pronounce himself to be an unprofitable servant, as the Truth Himself saith, "When

you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants." Then may he be truly poor and naked in spirit, and say with the Prophet, "I am desolate and afflicted." Yet none is richer than that man, none more powerful, none more free; for he knoweth how to leave himself and all things, and to set himself in the lowest place.

UNTO many this seemeth an hard speech, "Deny thyself, take up thy Cross, and follow JESUS." But much harder will it be to hear that last word, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." For they who now

willingly hear and follow the word of the Cross, shall not then fear to hear the sentence of everlasting damnation. This sign of the Cross shall be in the heaven, when the Lord shall come to judgment. Then all the servants of the Cross, who in their life-time conformed themselves unto Christ crucified, shall draw near unto Christ the judge with great confidence.

WHY fearest thou to take up the Cross which leadeth thee to a kingdom? In the Cross is salvation, in the Cross is life, in the Cross is protection against our enemies, in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the

Cross joy of spirit, in the Cross the height of virtue, in the Cross the perfection of sanctity. There is no salvation of the soul, nor hope of everlasting life, but in the Cross. Take up therefore thy Cross and follow JESUS, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He went before, bearing His Cross, and died for thee on the Cross; that thou mightest also bear thy Cross and desire to die on the Cross with Him. For if thou be dead with Him, thou shalt also live with Him. And if thou be His companion in punishment, thou shalt be partaker with Him also in glory.

BEHOLD! in the Cross all doth consist, and all lieth in our dying thereon; for there is no other way unto life, and unto true inward peace, but the way of the holy Cross. Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy Cross. Dispose and order all things according to thy will and judgment; yet thou shalt ever find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly or against thy will, and so thou shalt ever find the Cross. For either thou shalt feel pain in thy

body, or in thy soul thou shalt suffer tribulation.

SOMETIMES thou shalt be forsaken of God, sometimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbors; and, what is more, oftentimes thou shalt be wearisome to thyself. Neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort; but so long as it pleaseth God, thou must bear it. For God will have thee learn to suffer tribulation without comfort; and that thou subject thyself wholly to Him, and by tribulation become more humble. No man hath so in his heart a sympathy with the passion of Christ, as he who hath suffered the

like himself. The Cross therefore is always ready, and everywhere waits for thee. Thou canst not escape it whithersoever thou runnest; for wheresoever thou goest, thou carriest thyself with thee, and shalt ever find thyself. Both above and below, without and within, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross; and everywhere of necessity thou must hold fast patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting Crown.

IF thou bear the Cross cheerfully, it will bear thee, and lead thee to the desired end, namely, where there

shall be an end of suffering, though here there shall not be. If thou bear it unwillingly, thou makest for thyself a burden, and increasest thy load, which yet notwithstanding thou must bear. If thou cast away one Cross, without doubt thou shalt find another, and that perhaps more heavy.

CHRIST'S whole life was a Cross and Martyrdom: and dost thou seek rest and joy for thyself? Thou art deceived, thou art deceived if thou seek any other thing than to suffer tribulations; for this whole mortal life is full of miseries, and marked on every side with Crosses. And

the higher a person hath advanced in the Spirit, so much the heavier Crosses he oftentimes findeth; because the grief of his banishment increaseth with his love to God.

FIGHT like a good soldier: and if thou sometimes fall through frailty, take again greater strength than before, trusting in God's more abundant grace: and take great heed of vain pleasing of thyself, and of pride. Pride brings many into error, and makes them sometimes fall into blindness almost incurable. Let the fall of the proud, thus foolishly presuming on their own strength, serve

thee for a warning, and keep thee ever humble.

IT is more profitable for thee and more safe, to conceal the grace of devotion, not to lift thyself on high, nor to speak much thereof, nor to dwell much thereon; but rather to despise thyself, and to fear lest the grace have been given to one unworthy of it. This affection thou must not too earnestly cleave unto, for it may be quickly changed to the contrary. Think when thou art in grace, how miserable and needy thou art wont to be without grace. Nor is it in this only that thy progress in spiritual life consists, that thou hast

the grace of comfort; but rather that with humility, self-denial, and patience, thou endurest the withdrawing thereof; provided thou do not then become listless in the exercise of prayer, nor suffer the rest of thy accustomed duties to be at all neglected. Rather do thou cheerfully perform what lieth in thee, according to the best of thy power and understanding; and do not wholly neglect thyself because of the dryness or anxiety of mind which thou feelest.

THERE are many who, when things succeed not well with them, presently become impatient or slothful. For the way of man is not al-

ways in his power, but it belongeth unto God to give, and to comfort, when He will, and how much He will, and whom He will; as it shall please Him, and no more. Some unadvised persons, by reason of their over-earnest desire of the grace of a devoted life, have overthrown themselves; because they attempted more than they were able to perform, not weighing the measure of their own weakness, but following the desire of their heart rather than the judgment of their reason. And because they dwelt on greater matters than was pleasing to God, they therefore quickly lost His grace. They who had built themselves nests in heaven were

made helpless and vile outcasts; to the end that being humbled and impoverished, they might learn not to fly with their own wings, but to trust under His feathers. They that are yet but novices and inexperienced in the way of the Lord, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, may easily be deceived and broken to pieces.

AND if they will rather follow their own notions than trust to others who are more experienced, their end will be dangerous, at least if they are unwilling to be drawn away from their own conceit. It is seldom the case that they who are wise in their

own conceit endure humbly to be governed by others. Better is it to have a small portion of good sense, with humility and a slender understanding, than great treasures of science with vain self-complacency. Better it is for thee to have little, than much of that which may make thee proud. He acts not very discreetly, who wholly gives himself over to joy, forgetting his former helplessness, and that chastened fear of the Lord, which is afraid of losing the grace which hath been offered. Nor again is he very valiantly wise who, in time of adversity or any heaviness, at once yields too much to despairing thoughts, and reflects and thinks

of God less trustfully than he ought.

HE who in time of peace is willing to be over-secure shall be often found in time of war too much dejected and full of fears. If thou couldest always continue humble and moderate within thyself, and also couldest thoroughly moderate and govern thy spirit, thou wouldst not so quickly fall into danger and offence.

IT is good counsel, that when fervor of spirit is kindled within thee, thou shouldst consider how it will be, when that light shall leave thee. And when this happeneth, then remember

that the light may return again, which, as a warning to thyself, and for God's own glory, He hath withdrawn for a time. Such trials are oftentimes more profitable, than if thou shouldst always have things prosper according to thy will. For a man's worthiness is not to be estimated by the number of visions and comforts which he may have, or by his skill in the Scriptures, or by his being placed in high station. But if he be grounded in true humility, and full of divine charity; if he be always purely and sincerely seeking God's honor; if he think nothing of and unfeignedly despise himself, and even rejoice more to be despised and made low by

others, than to be honored by them.

BEWARE therefore thou lean not too much upon any desire, conceived without asking God's counsel, lest perhaps afterwards it repent thee, or thou be displeased with that which at first pleased thee, and which thou desiredst earnestly, as the best. For not every affection which seems good is immediately to be followed; nor on the other hand is every contrary affection at the first to be avoided. It is sometimes expedient to use a restraint even in good desires and endeavors, lest through unseasonable effort thou incur distraction of mind;

lest by thy want of self-government thou beget a scandal unto others; or again, being by others thwarted and resisted, thou become suddenly confounded, and so fall.

DOST thou think that the men of this world suffer nothing or but as little? Ask even of those who live most at ease, and thou shalt find it otherwise. But thou wilt say, they have many delights, and follow their own wills, and therefore they do not much weigh their own afflictions. Be it so, that they have whatsoever they will; but how long dost thou think that it will last? Behold, the wealthy of this world shall consume away like

smoke, and there shall be no memory of their past joys! Yea, even while they are yet alive, they do not rest in them without bitterness, and weariness, and fear. For from the selfsame thing in which they delight they oftentimes receive the penalty of sorrow. And it is but just that having inordinately sought and followed after pleasures, they should enjoy them not without shame and bitterness.

IT is but little which thou suffer-est, in comparison of those who suffered so much, who were so strongly tempted, so grievously afflicted, so many ways tried and exercised.

Thou oughtest therefore to call to mind the more heavy sufferings of others, that so thou mayest the more easily bear thine own very small troubles. And if they seem unto thee not very small, then beware lest thine impatience be the cause thereof. However, whether they be small or whether they be great, endeavor patiently to undergo them all.

THE better thou disposest thyself to suffering, the more wisely thou doest, and the greater reward shalt thou receive. Thou shalt also more easily endure it, if both in mind and by habit thou art diligently prepared thereunto.

DO not say, "I cannot endure to suffer these things at the hands of such an one, nor ought I to endure things of this sort; for he hath done me great wrong, and reproacheth me with things which I never thought of; but of another I will willingly suffer, that is, if they are things which I shall see I ought to suffer." Such a thought is foolish; it considereth not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it is to be crowned; but rather, weigheth too exactly the persons, and the injuries offered to itself.

HE is not truly patient who is willing to suffer only so much as he thinks good, and from whom he pleases. But the truly patient man minds not by whom he is exercised, whether by his superiors, by one of his equals, or by an inferior; whether by a good and holy man, or by one that is perverse and unworthy. But indifferently from every creature, how much soever, or how often soever anything adverse befall him, he takes it all thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteems it great gain: for with God it is impossible that anything, how small soever, if

only it be suffered for God's sake, should pass without its reward.

BE thou therefore prepared for the fight, if thou wilt win the victory. Without a combat thou canst not attain unto the crown of patience. If thou art unwilling to suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. But if thou desire to be crowned, fight manfully, endure patiently. Without labor there is no rest, nor without fighting can the victory be won.

HE that hath received the greatest cannot glory of his own desert, nor extol himself above others, nor exult over the lesser. For he is the great-

est and the best who ascribeth least unto himself, and who in rendering thanks is the most humble and most devout. And he that esteemeth himself viler than all men, and judgeth himself most unworthy, is fittest to receive greater blessings.

BE not curious, nor trouble thyself with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? follow thou God. For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or such, or whether this man do or speak this or that? Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give account for thyself; why therefore dost thou thus entangle thyself? Behold, He knows every

one, and sees all things that are done under the sun; also He understands how it is with every one, what he thinks, what he wishes, and at what his intentions aim. Unto Him therefore all things are to be committed; but do thou keep thyself in peace, and leave the unquiet to be as unquiet as they will. Whatsoever they shall have done or said, shall come upon themselves, for Him they cannot deceive.

BE not careful for the shadow of a great name, or for the familiar friendship of many, or for the particular and separate affection of men. For these things both distract the

heart, and greatly darken it. Willingly would I speak my word, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou wouldst diligently watch for my coming, and open unto me the door of thine heart. Be thou circumspect, and watchful in prayer, and in all things humble thyself.

THOU oughtest to give all for all, and to be in nothing thine own. Know thou that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. According to the love and affection thou bearest to anything, so doth it cleave unto thee more or less. If thy love be pure, simple, and well-ordered, thou shalt

be free from bondage. Do not covet that which it is not lawful for thee to have. Do not have that which may hinder thee, and may deprive thee of inward liberty. Strange it is that thou committest not thyself wholly unto God from the bottom of thy heart, together with all things thou canst have or desire.

WHY dost thou consume thyself with vain grief? why dost thou weary thyself with needless cares? Submit to God's good will, and thou shalt suffer no hurt. If thou seek this or that, and wouldst be here or there, the better to enjoy thine own profit and pleasure, thou shalt never

be at peace, nor free from trouble of mind. For in every case somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some one to cross thee.

TRUST in God, and put thy confidence in His mercy. When thou thinkest thyself farthest off from Him, oftentimes He is nearest unto thee. When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes the greatest gain of reward is close at hand. All is not lost, when a thing falleth out against thee. Thou must not judge according to present feeling, nor so take any grief, or give thyself over to it, from whencesoever it com-

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eth, as though all hopes of escape were quite taken away.

FROM a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of a good life.

WE ask how much a man has done: but from what principle he acts, is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be courageous, rich, handsome, skilful, a good writer, a good singer, or a good laborer; but how poor he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and spiritual, is seldom spoken of. Nature respecteth the outward things of a man, grace turneth itself to the inward. The one is often disap-

pointed; the other hath her trust in God, and so is not deceived.

WHO art thou that fearest a mortal man? to-day he is, and to-morrow he is not seen. Fear God, and thou shalt not need to shrink from the terrors of men. What harm can the words or injuries of any man do thee? He hurteth himself rather than thee, nor shall he be able to avoid the judgment of God, whosoever he be. Do thou have God before thine eyes, and contend not with peevish words. And if for the present thou seem to be worsted and to suffer shame undeservedly, do not therefore repine,

neither do thou by impatience lessen thy crown. But rather lift thou up thine eyes to Him in heaven, who is able to deliver thee from all shame and wrong, and to render to every man according to his works.

OFTENTIMES a man vehemently struggleth for somewhat he desireth, and when he hath arrived at it, he beginneth to be of another mind; for man's affections do not long continue fixed on one object, but rather do urge him from one thing to another. It is therefore no small benefit for a man to forsake himself even in the smallest things.

THE true profiting of a man consisteth in the denying of himself; and he that thus denieth himself, liveth in great freedom and security. But the old enemy, who always setteth himself against all that are good, ceaseth at no time from tempting, but day and night lieth grievously in wait, to cast the unwary, if he can, headlong into the snare of deceit. Therefore "Watch ye, and pray," saith our Lord, "that ye enter not into temptation."

O HOW good is it, and how it tendeth to peace, to be silent about other men, and not to believe at

random all that is said, nor eagerly to report what we have heard.

TO how many hath virtue itself, known and over hastily commended, been hurtful! How profitable hath grace been when preserved in silence in this frail life, which is temptation and warfare!

BE not dismayed by the painful labors which thou hast undertaken for God, neither be thou utterly cast down because of any tribulations which befall thee; but let His promise strengthen and comfort thee in all events. He is able to reward thee above all measure and degree. Thou

shalt not long toil here, and shalt not always be oppressed with grief. Wait a little while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thine evils. There will come an hour when all labor and trouble shall cease. Poor and brief is all that which passeth away with time. Do with thy might what thou doest; labor faithfully in His vineyard; He will be thy reward. Write, read, mourn, keep silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully; life everlasting is worthy of all these, yea, and of greater combats.

THOU art still to be tried upon earth, and to be exercised in many things. Comfort shall be some-

times given thee, but the abundant fulness thereof shall not be granted. Take courage therefore, and be valiant, as well in doing as in suffering things contrary to nature. It is thy duty to put on the new man, and to be changed into another man. It is thy duty oftentimes to do what thou wouldst not; thy duty to leave undone what thou wouldst do. That which pleaseth others shall go well forward; that which pleaseth thee shall not speed. That which others say shall be heard; what thou sayest shall be accounted nothing: others shall ask and shall receive; thou shalt ask but shalt not obtain.

OTHERS shall be great in the praise of men, but about thee there shall be no word. To others this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accounted a thing of no use. At this nature will sometimes be troubled, and it is a great thing if thou bear it with silence. In these and many such like things, the faithful servant of the Lord is wont to be tried, how far he can deny and break his will in all things. There is scarcely anything wherein thou hast such need to die to thyself, as in seeing and suffering those things that are contrary to thy will; especially when that is commanded to be

done, which seemeth unto thee inconvenient, or useless. And because thou being under authority darest not resist the higher power, therefore it seems hard to thee to walk at another's beck, and to feel that thou must give up all thine own will.

MARK diligently the stirrings of nature and grace; for in a very contrary yet subtle manner do they move, so that they can hardly be distinguished but by him that is spiritually and inwardly enlightened. All men indeed desire that which is good, and pretend some good in their words and deeds: and therefore under the show of good, many are

deceived. Nature is crafty, and seduceth many, ensnareth and deceiveth them, and always proposeth herself for her end and object. But grace walketh in simplicity, abstaineth from all show of evil, sheltereth not herself under deceits, doeth all things purely for God's sake, in whom also she finally resteth.

NATURE is unwilling and loth to die, or to be kept down, or to be overcome, or to be in subjection, or readily to be subdued. But grace studieth self-mortification, resisteth sensuality, seeketh to be in subjection, is desirous to be kept under, and wisheth not to use her own

liberty. She loveth to be kept under discipline, and desireth not to rule over any, but always to live and remain and be under God, and for God's sake is ready humbly to bow down unto all. Nature striveth for her own advantage, and considereth what profit she may reap by another. Grace considereth not what is profitable and convenient unto herself, but rather what may be for the good of many. Nature willingly receiveth honor and reverence. Grace faithfully attributeth all honor and glory unto God.

NATURE feareth shame and contempt. Grace rejoiceth to suffer

reproach for the name of JESUS. Nature loveth leisure and bodily ease. Grace cannot be unemployed, but cheerfully embraceth labor. Nature seeketh to have things that are curious and beautiful, and abhorreth those which are cheap and coarse. Grace delighteth in what is plain and humble, despiseth not rough things, and refuseth not to be clothed in that which is old and worn. Nature respecteth temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for loss, is irritated by every little injurious word. Grace looketh to things eternal, cleaveth not to things temporal, is not disturbed at losses, nor soured with hard words; because she

hath placed her treasure and joy in heaven, where nothing of it perisheth.

NATURE is covetous, doth more willingly receive than give, and loveth to have things private and her own. Grace is kind of heart, and ready to share with others, shunneth private interest, is content with a little, judgeth that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Nature inclineth a man to the creature, to his own flesh, to vanities, and to wandering hither and thither. Grace draweth him unto God and to every virtue, renounceth the creature, avoideth the world, hateth the desires of the flesh, restraineth wanderings abroad, blush-

eth to be seen in public. Nature is willing to have some outward solace, whereby she may receive delight of the senses. Grace seeketh consolation in God alone, and to have delight in the highest good above all visible things.

NATURE turneth everything to her own gain and profit, she cannot bear to do anything without reward, but for every kindness she hopeth to obtain either what is equal, or what is better, or at least praise or favor; and is very earnest to have her works and gifts much valued. Grace seeketh no temporal thing, nor

desireth any other reward save God alone, and asketh not more of temporal necessaries, than what may serve her for the obtaining of things eternal.

NATURE rejoiceth to have many friends and kinsfolk, she glorieth of noble place and noble birth, she smileth on the powerful, fawneth upon the rich, applaudeth those who are like herself. Grace loveth even her enemies, and is not puffed up with multitude of friends; and thinketh not greatly of high birth, unless it be joined with more exalted virtue. Grace favoreth the poor rather than

the rich, sympathizeth more with the innocent than with the powerful, rejoiceth with the true man, not with the deceitful. She is ever exhorting good men to strive for the best gifts; and by all virtue to become like to the Son of God. Nature quickly complaineth of want and of trouble. Grace endureth need with firmness and constancy.

NATURE referreth all things to herself, striveth and argueth for herself. Grace bringeth back all to God, from whence originally they proceed; she ascribeth no good to herself, nor doth she arrogantly presume; she con-

tendeth not, nor preferreth her own opinion before others; but in every matter of sense and understanding she submitteth herself unto the eternal wisdom and the divine judgment. Nature is eager to know secrets and to hear news; she loveth to appear abroad and to make proof of many things by her own senses; she desireth to be acknowledged, and to do things for which she may be praised and admired. Grace careth not to hear news, nor to understand curious matters (because all this taketh its rise from the old corruption of man), seeing that upon earth there is nothing new, nothing durable. Grace teacheth therefore to restrain the

senses, to shun vain complacency and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of admiration and praise, and from everything and in every knowledge to seek profitable fruit, and the praise and honor of God. She will not have herself nor that which pertaineth to her publicly praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in His gifts, because that of mere love He bestoweth all things.

DIVINE grace is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the heart, the solace in affliction, the driver away of sorrow, the

expeller of fear, the nurse of devotion, the mother of tears. Without this, what am I but a withered branch, and an unprofitable stock only meet to be cast away!

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